Crop Insurance News
Summer Application Deadlines

We often don't think about crop and revenue insurance this time of the year, but there are several important issues and opportunities you may want to consider.

Dairy LGM Sign-Up Scheduled for May 31 & June 1; June enrollment on June 28 & 29

Funding for the Dairy Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) Program is readily available for the May sign-up period. The program is authorized in the lower 48 states, and with this widespread availability, funding will likely be quickly utilized. Dairy producers should give the LGM for dairy program consideration based on the extreme volatility in feed pricing alone. A policy could help to set a guaranteed margin and provide relief in an unstable environment.

If you feel that Dairy LGM may benefit you, contact your crop insurance agent as soon as possible to get details for your farm and to take care of pre-enrollment issues. Sign-ups will begin on Friday, May 31 and continue through June 01, if funds are not exhausted.

Did You Plant Corn Late or Do You Need to Replant a Crop?

Prevented Planting (PP) coverage is available on corn in New Hampshire. If you are unable to plant your crop by the Final Planting Date or during the late planting period, your option (get dates from your agent as they vary by crop by county) due to an insured cause of loss, you could be eligible for a PP payment. One of the great benefits of the prevented planting option is that, if the condition is general for similar farms in the area, you are protected acre by-acre, not unit-by-unit as you are at harvest time. The PP payment is a percentage of your insurance guarantee. The default guarantee for the usual PP option is 60 percent of the harvest guarantee for most crops. Premium options are available to buy up on PP coverage by +5 or +10 percent. Prevented Planting has many rules, so contact your agent immediately for details if you have a prevented planting situation.

Many of the crop insurance policies provide replanting payments if you are required to replant a crop due to insurable cause. If you experience a replanting situation, contact your agent for details before you destroy the evidence of damage.

July 31 is the Deadline for fall Forage Seeding Coverage

Alfalfa and forage mixtures with at least 50 percent legume species can be protected against damage or loss due to adverse weather, fire, insects, disease and wildlife in Merrimack county (and other NH counties by written agreement). The sales closing date for fall seeded crops is July 31. For more information about forage seeding coverage, contact your crop insurance agent.

Impatiens Downy Mildew a Concern for 2013

Impatiens downy mildew (IDM) is a relatively new disease on garden impatiens in New Hampshire. The disease, first identified in New Hampshire in 2012, is caused by the pathogen Plasmopara obducens. All varieties of garden impatiens (Impatiens walleriana) are susceptible, including double impatiens. There are reports that native wild impatiens, or jewelweeds (I. pallida and I. capensis), are also susceptible. New Guinea impatiens (I. hawkeri) and hybrids are not susceptible. All other bedding plants are NOT susceptible to the disease.

Early symptoms of IDM first appear as slightly yellowed or light green-mottled leaves. The early symptoms can often be mistaken for a nutritional deficiency. Leaves may curl downward at the edges suggesting a lack of water. During periods when humidity is high, a white, mildew-like growth develops on the underside of the yellowed and curled leaves. The mildew-like growth may also be seen on leaves that appear green. As the disease progresses, flowers and leaves begin to drop, eventually leaving bare stems with only a few leaves at the top. Stems often collapse in the final stages of the disease.

Impatiens plants can become infected either by spores that overwintered in the garden soil where infected plants were grown the previous year, or from spores spread by water splashing from nearby infected plants or windborne spores from other landscapes. The development of IDM is favored by moist or humid weather conditions. New infections occur when there is a thin film of moisture on leaf surfaces for at least a few hours. Rainy periods, overhead irrigation (especially at night), and dense planting will encourage disease development and spread.

Since the pathogen can overwinter in the soil, garden impatiens should not be planted where the disease has been previously found. Impatiens downy mildew can occur in beds without any history of the disease; however, if spores are blown in from other areas (the majority of the infections in New Hampshire in 2012 appeared after tropical storms moved through the state). It is best to plant areas with a history of the disease with alternative plants such as New Guinea impatiens, begonias, coleus, or torenia. A list of alternative plants suitable for New Hampshire can be found on the UNH Cooperative Extension website at www.bit.ly/16Z6JwK.

Scout regularly for the symptoms of the disease. Remove infected plants, including the roots and any leaf debris, and place in a garbage bag in the trash. Do NOT compost the infected material. Infected plants will not recover. Fungicides are NOT recommended for use by home gardeners. Although fungicides with activity for short-term protection against IDM are available for professional landscapers and plant growers, fungicide formulations available for use by home gardeners have not been extensively trialed, thus there are no guarantees they will work over the course of the season, even with repeated applications.

Additional information on IDM can be found at. If you discover impatiens downy mildew this growing season, please inform the UNH Plant Diagnostic Lab at (603) 862-3841 so we can track where the disease occurs in 2013.

Question of the Week

Q. Help, my plants are dying! My landscaper spread bark mulch yesterday, and today the plants are scorched and are wilting with some losing their leaves. My lawn next to the mulched beds is even yellowing. What can I do?

A. Known as sour mulch, this problem occasionally shows up when hardwood mulch has been stockpiled in very large piles. High moisture and lack of oxygen towards the center and bottoms of these piles leads to anaerobic fermentation, producing by-products such as alcohol, ammonia, and organic acids that can harm plants.

Often you can detect sour mulch by its rotten-egg, vinegary, or ammonia-like smell, although these odors dissipate quickly once the mulch is spread in a shallow layer. It may also feel hot to the touch. The pH is very low, ranging from 2.2 to 3.5, a good diagnostic test if you suspect you have sour mulch.

Once sour mulch is spread in the landscape, plants show symptoms within a day. Sometimes they recover and other times they die. A wide range of plants, from herbaceous perennials and annuals to newly planted trees and shrubs, can be affected.

Damage is quick but not long-lasting. The harmful compounds in the mulch will volatilize and/or leach out fairly quickly once the mulch is spread in a shallow layer. Landscapers who suspect they have piles of sour mulch should check the pH and, if in doubt, spread the mulch and turn it to provide aeration. Apply lots of water to leach out the toxins and apply an ample amount of lime to bring the pH back up. After a few weeks, the mulch should be safe to use.

Homeowners shouldn't buy, spread or allow application of mulch with off-odors or mulch that's hot to the touch.

Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension Education Center's Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00.

Pesticide Applicator Recertification Seminars
Meetings approved by the Division of Pesticide Control for recertification credits.

June 4 IPM For Food Plants - Day 1
Hershey Motor Lodge, Hershey, PA
Contact: Richard Kammerling, 631-421-1120 7 C

June 5 IPM For Food Plants - Day 2
Hershey Motor Lodge, Hershey, PA
Contact: Richard Kammerling, 631-421-1120 6 C

***PC = Private Credits** ***C = Commercial Credits**